881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

"The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
585 591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

"Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
595 586 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about.
[684] Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

"When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
843 846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities." [595]

"The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children.
854 While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

"Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried
647 women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12

CHAPTER VI.

Birth customs.

M 843 Various customs are practised at the birth of a child, many of which are of a religious significance, their aim being to protect the new-born child and its mother against supernatural dangers. Both the ideas and the practices to which they give rise are much the same among the Choroti, the Mataco, and the Tobas. As soon as the Indian woman feels herself to be pregnant she begins to observe certain rules with regard to her diet. She generally abstains from eating meat, contenting herself with maize and certain leaves. The Toba women during this time take particular T [843] care not to eat fish. and with other kinds of animal food she is cautious. Thus if she eats the paunch or the intestines of a cow she will fall ill and birth will be rendered more difficult. When the child arrives, it is washed M in water, the umbilical cord is cut off with a snail's shell and guarded for 844 some time with great care. If the cord were cut off with a knife, the child, it is believed, would soon die. No iron instrument must come in contact with the new-born babe. Again, the navel-string cut off must be guarded until the navel wound is perfectly healed. If it is thrown away prematurely, this would be the same as throwing away the life of the child, which would die in consequence. The umbilical cord, according to the idea of M the Indians, remains in some mysterious connection with the new-born [171] child. These ideas are found among all Pilcomayo tribes, but they seem to be common to all South American Indians living in a state of nature.

The rites and ceremonies taking place after the little one has arrived all depend on the belief of the Indians that there is a very intimate connection between the child and its mother, and that both of them are badly exposed to the attacks of evil spirits. Fully to understand them and the behaviour of the woman in child-bed we must first of all take into consideration that the Indian woman in general bears children with great

a) *Conception*

831 Sperm is located in the knee. In order to cause an abun-
262 dant secretion of sperm, it is advisable to drink broth and milk and to eat chickens. It is important not to drink the broth of a bird called *čana* for the child would then be lazy. In order to have healthy children it is highly recommended that the broth of an aquatic bird called *aṣkan* be drunk;
842 The child is formed by the sperm which is assimilated into milk. The »milk» coagulates and fills up the matrix, thus do children form themselves gradually. The presence of the child in a mother's womb prevents the blood from
• [843] flowing and menstruation stops. Pregnancy lasts eight months.

842 It is impossible for a man not to procreate children. Only
789 women can be sterile. Sterility may occur because the woman has been stopped up by a medicine-man, thus man's »milk» can no longer penetrate into her bosom. This may be accounted for in two ways. A woman may ask a medicine-man to make her sterile, or a bad medicine-man may make a woman sterile in order to harm her family. Sterility may be cured by a medicine-man, but the task is not easy and there are few who will attempt it.

b) *Pregnancy and Childbirth*

843 A pregnant woman works but little, she most eat sufficient, but not too much, food. The child, still in the mother's womb, sucks the food absorbed by its father and mother and if they were to eat too much the child would get fat and would be unable to come out. The husband of an expectant mother must give up certain kinds or work. He cannot use a knife or an axe for the strokes of any cutting instrument might kill or wound the child. He must not wear boots lest the child's legs be crooked. If he keeps his hat on his head the skull of the child will be flat. He must not write with ink lest the child's face be covered with marks.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

A pregnant woman must avoid sexual intercourse if she does not want to incur disgrace by having twins.

To avoid accidents and to facilitate delivery, pregnant women use certain medicines, especially the *litsitáx* root which they toast and pound into a powder in a mortar. They never wear belts or stretch themselves lest the child take a wrong position. The woman brings the child to birth in a squatting posture, she holds on to a stick at this time. Her husband and an old woman give her any assistance she may need. The afterbirth is buried and the navel is cauterized with the burning stem of a gourd. At the birth, the father picks up the child and it bears his likeness, but if ist is picked up by someone else the child will resemble that person. When twins are born, which seems to occur very seldom, one is taken by the mother of the woman and is brought up as her own child.

Woman cause abortion by using a certain plant (*nLo̱t*) which looks like manioc. The root is ground and taken with water. The sterilizing effect of this drug may last for two, four, or eight years.

c) *Names*

The name is given by the father when the child is from one to three years old. The father may dream of an animal, an object, a sentence or a word pronounced by one of the charcters in his dream, and this becomes the name of the child. A name is often distorted, a fact which explains their queer form. For instance *čalax* »black woman» has become *načalax* and *apan-toi* »bread», *hap?ap*.

d) *Marriage*

The suiter may get the approval of his future father-in-law by giving him money or cattle, but very often the authorization of the girl's father is far less essential than that of the mother. If she opposes the marriage there is absolutely nothing that can be done. It may happen that the father

114 down on the field, from the reports of excellent informants. They have been obtained in San Andres and Yuto, on the Pilcomayo river, and in San Patricio, on the river Bermejo.

Birth and Infancy

842 754 The child is produced by the father's seed, which germinates, as does a plant, within the mother. Sterility is always considered by the Matacos to be the mother's fault. They explain it as being an accident brought about by some witch doctor who is using magic to prevent the sperm from getting into the woman's body. It is said that some women go to a witch doctor with the express purpose of having conception prevented. The witch doctors can, furthermore, break the enchantment, although this is considered an extraordinarily difficult thing to do.

843 A pregnant woman eats moderately so that the child will not grow too large and cause difficulty at birth. The mystical bonds between father and child find their expression in a great number of "tabus." Thus, just prior to the child's birth, the father must abstain from all work that might cause the child to be deformed. He is prohibited, in particular, from using any instrument with a cutting edge (axes, knives, hoes) in order to avoid the child's coming into the world with wounds, a harelip, for instance. The father is careful not to wear sandals or shoes, in order to ensure that the infant not have one foot larger than the other. If the father should put on a hat, the upper part of [9] the child's head will be absolutely flat. The mission [212] Indians go so far as to keep from writing, fearful that the offspring be born with a wrinkled face.

If a father to be kills only male animals on the hunt, it is a sign that the child about to be born will be a male.

Precautions of various kinds are likewise taken by the women before the child's birth. They avoid girding themselves too tightly about the waist with a belt and sleeping in a position which might lead to a difficult birth. Some women make use of drugs to make sure that no accident will overtake them. To this end they take a powder made

/217 cont./

Notes

753 755 843 1. This woman, who was about seven months pregnant, continued to carry enormous loads of dry wood, which provoked the illness to which she succumbed.

[761] 2. According to the opinion of the village, the death was due to the fact that she had become pregnant before her first child knew how to feed itself.